

# Washington, DC: Industrial Land Use Study; Zoning

## Planning to Address Municipal Functions

### WASHINGTON, DC

The Industrial Land Use Study provides detailed guidance to the Office of Planning for a particular type of land use decision, specifically, whether to rezone land currently zoned for industry to some other use, typically housing and/or retail. Given both current market conditions and the scarcity of both industrial land and good building sites of any type, a decision to rezone industrial property will in many cases quickly result in its conversion from industrial use. From a “highest and best use” perspective, such conversions may be desirable. However, the current study is intended to discover if there are circumstances where industrial zoning (hence industrial land) should be strategically preserved.

Specifically:

- Are there users in the industrial areas whose importance to the District economy is not reflected in their ability to pay rent?
- Are there users in the industrial areas whose value as a source of good jobs outweighs their lower value from a real estate perspective?
- Lastly, as the industrial areas provide space for municipal functions that would be inappropriate in a



*Industrial Buildings in Washington, DC*



residential or commercial area, are there existing or reasonably foreseeable municipal uses which might lack for appropriate sites if industrial land were to be lost?

To answer these questions, the study is completing the following:

1. An inventory of the existing areas of industrial zoning. The inventory includes field surveys to identify major tenants, GIS analysis to identify site characteristics and potential “soft sites,” and a survey instrument to determine (a) the value of a DC location to specific businesses; and (b) linkages between industrial area businesses and the District’s core industries.
2. A process run to determine the current and future needs of each municipal agency for industrial land, and to brainstorm creative approaches for meeting those needs, including co-location.
3. An economic and industrial market study, to determine the role of specific industries in the DC economy, the trends in these sectors over time, and the current state of the market for industrial land and buildings (i.e. who is looking for space, of what type, and for what price).
4. The two outcomes will be an industrial area plan, focusing on land use and physical planning; and an implementation plan, focusing on municipal actions.

